

# FUEL

## *Functional and Useful English Learning* An EFL Teaching System

By Joe Drakos

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### Abstract

This is an English communication instruction system designed to teach children basic, easy to remember conversation strategies without the use of a textbook or to serve as a supplement learning system to a textbook. This English communication training method provides learners with concrete language patterns, a broad spectrum of vocabulary and encourages students to use their own creative thinking process to develop real English sentences, questions and answers. This system can also serve as a basic curriculum guide for novice EFL teachers teaching in overseas settings or for experienced EFL teachers who are looking for suggestions to improve their teaching style and classes.

### Why the FUEL System was Developed

Learning English for communication purpose is becoming more and more popular and a necessity as the world becomes more global society. English language study has been a part of many education programs of many countries for quite some time. English language training has also entered the private education sector and has become a major part of many countries private education industries. The majority of students in these private schools are young children between the ages of three and twelve and to a lesser extent junior and senior high school students and business people who deal with international clients or have locations in countries other than their own, hence requiring them to have English communication skills. Furthermore, from perusing the Internet's various website providing job listings in EFL, many of these schools that need English teachers exist in Asia. Although it seems that studying English is more popular than other places, it seems that Asian students learning English have had the most difficulties acquiring the language. This is mainly because of the differences between English and their mother languages, social thinking patterns and cultural differences.

My reason for developing this system comes from two general problems I have encountered during my experience teaching EFL in Japan. One is the difficulties young learners have with remembering concepts taught in classes. The other is the lack of training and activity ideas for novice teachers.

Many Japanese parents have caught on to the idea that one of the key ways for their children to be successful in the future is to be competent in English, particularly in the area of English communication. It is common knowledge that although Japanese schools include English study in Jr. High and high school, a total of 6 years, with the majority of that study centering on vocabulary memorization and grammar, there is little or no concentration on using the language in a communication setting. Therefore, very few students graduating from high school in Japan can communicate competently and confidently in English, even in the most simplistic situation. English education continues for another two years at the college level which equates to an average 8 year study of English. After all of this “English language study” the average “educated” Japanese person can barely score 400 points on a standard TOEIC test.

There have been steps made towards including communication training in secondary education, yet many EFL teachers agree that the time allotted to communication training is gravely insufficient for positive communication development. Some schools may even hire native English speaking assistants through such as the JET program and contracts with private schools for native teachers but the general agreement is that it is more of a novelty than advantage. In recent years, many elementary schools have started English classes taught exclusively by English speakers (non-Japanese native English speakers and Japanese) but a recent poll in Osaka states parents are worried about this new class because of the lack of qualified teachers<sup>1</sup>. This concern is growing as English will become a required course of study for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders in 2010. Furthermore, the education ministry will be increasing the vocabulary load for secondary English classes as well as requiring English classes to be taught mainly in English in hopes to encourage students’ communication skill development<sup>2</sup>. There is no mention, though, on how they are going to get students to communicate in English.

Because of the lack of effective English communication training in public schools many parents opt to send their children to private English schools that employ native speakers in hopes that their children will learn to speak English well. This is an excellent opportunity for many to develop skills but there are still many problems in this industry that hinder many students’ skill development. The following will discuss three problems that I have found to directly effect students’ communication skill development. One problem is that many schools I have worked at or encountered is they rarely include a curriculum or define a basic set of learning goals. Classes are based on a core textbook series and the teachers are left to define their classes. Nothing is uniform so if the a student changes teachers or schools the new teacher has to begin again in order to help the new student catch up to his or her classmates.

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<sup>1</sup> Yomiuri Shinbun, May 18th, 2008 English Website edition

<sup>2</sup> Japan Times Online, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008

Another problem is the expenses that are involved with attending schools of this sort. Many schools charge high tuition fees, contract fees and membership dues; and with the Japanese economy in its current condition most of those wanting to take classes cannot afford to attend such schools. Fortunately, a trend towards affordable private lessons is emerging with schools be opened by non- Japanese English speakers. Trust by the Japanese is being established because most of the non-Japanese school owners are members of the community or may have their own family.

The major issue, as mentioned earlier, is that many, but not all, of the children, and even older students, are not understanding nor remembering anything but self introductions, simple words such as colors and numbers and static phrases that tend to be common nuances in Japanese media. They fail to remember any spontaneous conversation topics especially when it tends not to follow previously learned material from a textbook. Take, for example, the simple static phrases such as “I like”. Most children can say “I like” and add the word “dog” to make “I like dog”. They can experiment further and use cat but they have difficulty expanding past the limited vocabulary they know. They even have difficulties eliciting other words that they have learned. However, most students can remember language points that are constantly practiced. These are mainly, “I’m fine, thank you.” In response to “How are you.” And, saying basic information about themselves like name and age. Many EFL experts believe this is because young people learn language best through repetition.

This next part will focus deeper into the curriculum development problem. Just about all of private schools offer children’s and junior high school student courses in both conversation and grammar. The problem I will focus on is divided into 3 parts: problems with textbooks, problems with time classroom time allotted to developing individual communication skills and problems finding language targets that students can actually use in real life. Since these schools, big or small, center on English education it can be inferred that most employ some type of curriculum which focuses on a textbook. Here in lies the first part of this problem. There is a wide range of textbook series for children that focus on a variety of English phrases each with the goal of getting a student to understand and use English. As for junior high school students I have yet to find any suitable course book that not only teaches useful English but also captures the student’s attention. A lot of books include what I term as ‘fats and fillers’. These are pages with activities that don’t focus on anything practical or require the teacher to make long explanations which are usually not understood the first time. Many of the text series I have encountered do not include an extensive vocabulary section nor do they build on previously taught language concepts. In short, useful language is only touched upon lightly when textbooks serve as the core.

The second problem that arises is the time allotted to get through a textbook. Most schools require their teachers to get through a textbook in a year period which means little time for review and practical use practice. Most school can only offer once-a-week lessons with each lesson consisting of 45 minutes to an hour. Most EFL experts would agree that if this is the only time the student is exposed to the target language then the student will not improve their language skills.

The third part of this problem is teaching what a native speaker would determine as “real” or “natural” ways of speaking. In most textbooks designed for younger learners there seems to be a limited amount of useful English included. Furthermore, many of these series include some useful phrases they lack any kind of expansion or “real” usage drills. This is usually left up to the teacher but this can prove equally difficult for the teacher as many Japanese children and students are apprehensive to speak in English without the use of visual aids or prompting. In turn, they become dependant on textbooks as guides or things to withdraw their attention from the person they are speaking to.

### The Purpose of the FUEL System as a Curriculum Foundation

Many people who choose to go to a foreign country to work as an EFL teacher have little or no training or experience teaching English. Since the demand in many countries for “native speaking” EFL teachers is high it is relatively easy for anyone who fits the “native English speaker” role to get employment. This is especially true when the role of the teacher is more for edutainment rather than actual pedagogy. Of course the ones who lack the experience in many cases expect and many times are told they will receive teacher training when they get to their new assignment. There are many schools that “train” new teachers though, in fact, they under-train new teachers. That is they provide training that is either too vague or it is so specialized that the novice teacher couldn’t possibly adapt during the time allotted as “training time”. Some schools have new teachers simply observe other teachers’ classes and accept that as efficient training while others leave it up to the discretion of the new teacher on how to conduct classes. In short, they should just mimic the “good” teachers and develop their own classes from there. Deciding what to do and how to do it can cause great amounts of confusion and stress for new teachers, even for those who have some sort of TEFL certificate but little or no experience. I have heard this phrase countless times from teachers new to the schools I have worked at: “What should I do?” In my early years of teaching EFL I had found myself asking the same question. I finally decided to do some research to remedy these problems and the results are found in this paper.

Since teacher training and a defined curriculum are vital for a successful school and successful teachers what can those with little or no experience but who have a real desire teach English and to help others develop a life long skill? My suggestion is to employ the Functional and Useful English Learning system, or FUEL system for short. This is a tri-level method of EFL teaching to teach students basic, useful and real English. It is repetitious yet it allows students to also experiment with target phrases and sentences by changing sentence objects. Its basic format centers on what many EFL teachers believe to be vital to successful language learning: repetition and usable function terms<sup>3</sup>. It also provides a basic, blueprint-style curriculum for novice teachers, teachers new to EFL teaching or experienced teachers looking for a systemized EFL curriculum. The system is no great revelation in EFL teaching. It is rather a visible and progressive English learning program. Something teachers can print out and refer to when necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> Jenkins, *How to Learn a Language and a Culture*

Something that excludes the academic innuendos and nuances that sometimes tend to cloud our ultimate goal: teaching people how to speak English.

The FUEL system begins with students learning to introduce themselves and ask others about their personal information such as age and where they live. It teaches vocabulary through word categories making word acquisition uniform and easy. Next, the FUEL system takes a variety of simple question and answer patterns in which the objects can be changed yet which still elicit the same yes or no type answer. Questions involving like, can and have and their respective answers are introduced and expanded on by the student and require little help from the teacher, after the initial explanation, as they involve the use of flash cards or written phrases on a board. From there it progresses to expanded versions of the beginner level or level 1 and then to question patterns which involve “wh-“questions (who, what, why, where, etc.) in advanced levels. In the end, the student will be able to not only ask and answer a variety of English inquiries but also remember them as they are constantly reviewed over the course.

The FUEL system is primarily for small English classes which have less than 10 students, though teachers who have large classes such as public school or kindergartens can also implement FUEL to the large-size classroom setting by augmenting the lessons. In fact, I have been able to implement some parts of this system into my elementary school classes with the aid the teacher and through small group exercises. Of course, progress through the program will slow because of the larger group of people and time consumption getting the target language understood and practiced.

### Understanding and Implementing the System

The FUEL system is quite easy to use and lessons are easy to teach. A table, rather than individual desks, is necessary so that the students can focus on the vocabulary cards<sup>4</sup>. If desks are only available then the teacher might try putting them together in groups facing each other to make a sufficient table-like surface. First the teacher must decide what part of the FUEL system to teach. The teacher must consider the ability of the students and how much of the decided FUEL point to teach in one lesson. Don't pile on too much in one session. Then the teacher must choose vocabulary that students can easily understand and change objectively. Let's use “like” questions and answers for a quick and easy example.

Vocabulary should be taught first. Without an adequate list of words it will be difficult for students to produce the target language focus of the lesson. In some cases vocabulary learning can be sufficient for an entire lesson. Fruit words, animal words or color words are some good categories to begin with as most students can relate to them and, in many cases, already know some. When the students can remember a good portion of the vocabulary the teacher can move on to teaching the target language. The teacher should write on the board or make a card with “I like...” Then the teacher will put a

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<sup>4</sup> Vocabulary cards are a key point to conducting FUEL system based English communication classes

number of flashcards in front of the students. The cards can be categorized by item (e.g. fruit, animals, etc) or random. If the vocabulary is new then the teacher needs to teach the new vocabulary. It is also good to take a few minutes to review any previously taught vocabulary. Once the vocabulary is learned the teacher can move on to the focus of the lesson. For those who can speak the students' native language it is fine to explain the meaning of like as to not waste time. I understand that some schools have an English only policy but mimicry and dancing around only serves as entertainment and in some cases confuses the students. Try, though, to quickly get through the native language explanation and right into the English portion. Make an example of yourself two or three times choosing one or two of the cards. Emotion can be used to emphasize the idea of like. Once the teacher is finished explaining the target language they should try using a question round exercise<sup>5</sup> to get the students used to the phrase or question. That is the teacher will begin the round by choosing a card and saying "I like \_\_\_\_". Next the teacher will motion for the students to choose their own cards and prepare their sentence. The turn then continues to each student until the round ends the teacher. This exercise can continue as many times as the teacher wishes and can easily be infused with other lessons as a review activity. The lesson centering on like should then proceed to the question end of the conversation; "do you like...?" and the answers that correspond. Of course, this can be taught in a later lesson. The "like" lesson advances as the students advance in their studies. For example, the teacher may teach "and" to get the students to discuss two or more things they like whether they be in a category or random. Lessons can focus on negative answers and explanation of what the student likes, i.e. "No, I don't (like X). I like Y". If you really think about it, the topic of "like" can be drawn out into a month long focus and can cover levels including second and third year students. This is only an example, clear and expanded examples will be explained in the discussion on lessons per age and experience section.

The FUEL system is designed to keep all students at the same level of learning. In many English conversation school cases, students are put into textbook oriented classes where the existing students are either half-way or  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of the way finished. That new student has little chance of catching up to the other students and will probably develop feelings which may have negative effects or outcomes in the class. The FUEL system is designed to build on the prescribed topics with constant review. Therefore, a student who enters an existing class will find the lesson topics easy to understand and have no problem catching up. Continuing with the example lesson on like a fourth grade beginner should have no problem getting into the lesson, understanding it and participating as the only change from the first level is the addition of "and" to describe two or more liked items, e.g. "I like apples, oranges and bananas." I think most teachers who use this system will find that planning, conducting and communicating their lessons will be much easier.

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<sup>5</sup> For and explanation of a question round sequence please read the article *Fun Question Rounds for Children's English Classes* published in the November, 2004 issue of the Internet TESL Journal at [www.iteslj.org](http://www.iteslj.org)

## Lessons Focuses per Age and Experience

The following explains the core language targets and how they can be expanded on in sequential years. They will be explained briefly and serve as, in a sense, a skeleton allowing the teacher's creative ability to "pack on the meat". The following also focuses on English in a communicative sense. Teachers who wish to include reading and writing in their curriculum can, of course, incorporate their own exercises. I sometimes have a writing session in my classes so students can get some experience writing English letters and words. I would like to reiterate here that the overall design for this language learning system is for young learners, however, the concepts may be used in beginning conversation classes for older students.

### Level 1 Beginners of all levels

FUEL focuses:

1. simple self-introductions (to be said in sequence)
  - a. name (last name can be included for a 4 part intro)
  - b. age
  - c. where they live
2. questions which correspond to the self-introduction (for listening)
  - a. "What's your name?"
  - b. "How old are you?"
  - c. "Where do you live?"

note- 1 and 2 can be taught in either order. Also, alphabet and number study should also be taught during this focus along with typical greetings like "hello" and "how are you".

3. simple sentences with "is"
  - a. use of this in "this is..."
  - b. use of that in "that is..."

note- use of articles a, an and the is up to the teacher

  - c. use of is to describe simple object with colors and size  
i.e. "apple is red", "that is blue", "this is big", etc.

4. simple sentences with "like"
  - a. expressing what one likes- "I like \_\_\_\_\_".
  - b. Expressing what another likes using he, she or it.

Note- this is where the use of flash cards comes in. Use single categories (e.g. fruit, animals, sports, etc) or random or mixed items.

  - c. asking questions using like- "Do you like \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - d. elicit correct answers- "Yes, I do." and "No, I don't"

5. simple sentences with “have”
  - a. expressing what one has- “I have a \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - b. expressing what another has using he, she and it.

Note- using flash cards makes the lesson go easier.

  - c. asking questions using have- “Do you have a \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - d. elicit correct answers “Yes, I do” and “No, I don’t”
  
6. simple sentence with “want”
  - a. expressing what one wants- “I want a \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - b. expressing what other want with he, she and it
  - c. asking questions using want- “Do you want a \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - d. elicit correct answers “Yes, I do” and “No, I don’t”

note- using real objects like plastic fruit or toy animals makes for a more interesting class as long as control can be kept.
  
7. simple sentences with “can”
  - a. expressing what one can do- “I can \_\_\_\_\_”
  - b. expressing what others can do using he, she and it

note- children will need to learn longer phrases such as “ride a bicycle”, play the piano” or “make curry”.

  - c. asking questions using can- “Can you \_\_\_\_\_?”
  - d. elicit correct answers “Yes, I can” and “No, I can’t”
  
8. simple sentences discussing time
  - a. learning time expressions- “it’s XX o’clock”
  - b. question for time “What time is it?”
  - c. adding 30, 15 and 45

note- this is a good time to get the kids to learn to count to 60.
  
9. simple sentences discussing placement of items, things, people or places
  - a. learning position words (placement prepositions): in, on, under, next to (by), in front of, behind.
  - b. elicit proper placement statements (pointing at object) “It’s \_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - c. question for placement “Where is the \_\_\_\_\_?”
  
10. simple sentences describing people
  - a. learning family and easy occupation words
  - b. combine pronouns and new words to create simple sentences, e.g. “she is a nurse. He is a doctor.”
  - c. Introduce “who”, “who is he?”/ “who is she”
  
11. counting items
  - a. question “How many”
  - b. answer “There are \_\_\_#\_.”

In total, there are 11 topics which can be expanded on in order to meet student's needs. These topics are expanded on as the student progresses; these will be presented next. For example, the second level for the conversation topic "like" includes the use of "and" to describe two or more things. As there are only 11 the open month may be used for review or the teacher can introduce a new topic if he or she sees fit. Remember, the FUEL system is designed to act as a blueprint or simple guide to help teachers teach useful, "real" English.

### Level 2

For students who have learned level 1 or are beginners in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> grades who have substantial English speaking skills and Junior High School Students

1. Building on the self introduction:
  - a. saying all three points from level 1 together
  - b. learning and asking questions individually per student
  - c. adding new items to the self introduction such as home, telephone number, birthday, etc.
2. New questions (for listening):
  - a. "Where do you live?"
  - b. "What's your telephone number?"
  - c. "When is your birthday?"
3. Building on this and that:
  - a. introduce the negative statement, e.g. that isn't a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. combine two items with the conjunction "and"
  - c. introducing plurals these and those
4. Building on like:
  - a. add "and" to talk about 2 or more likes, e.g. I like x, y and z
  - b. do the opposite and tell about dislikes, e.g. "I don't like a or b"
  - c. introduce the use of "but", e.g. "I like x, but I don't like a."

note- use other pronouns and correct verb forms to make new statements
5. Building on have:
  - a. add "and" to talk about 2 or more things that students have, e.g. "I have a bike and a ball."
  - b. Do the opposite and tell about things the students don't have, e.g. "I don't have a gun."
  - c. Add the use of "but", e.g. "I have a bike, but I don't have a ball."

note- use other pronouns and correct verb forms to make new statements

6. Building on want:
  - a. add “and” to talk about 2 or more things the student wants, e.g. “I want a computer and a dog.”
  - b. do the opposite and tell about things the students don’t want, e.g. “I don’t want a computer or a dog.” Remember “or”.
  - c. add the use of but, e.g. “I want a computer, but I don’t want a dog.”note- use other pronouns and correct verb forms to make new statements.
7. Building on can:
  - a. add “and” to talk about 2 or more things the student can do, e.g. “I can ski and ride a bike.”
  - b. do the opposite and tell about things the students can’t do, e.g. “I can’t ski or ride a bike.”
  - c. Add the use of “but”, e.g. “I can ski, but I can’t ride a bike.”note- use other pronouns and correct verb forms to make new statements.
8. Building on time:
  - a. use numerical time phrases other than 15, 30 and 45.
  - b. introduce phrases “quarter to” and “quarter after”
  - c. answering simple schedule questions
9. Building on prepositions:
  - a. introduce more prepositions: above, below, around, on the left, etc.
  - b. expanded questions and descriptions of placements
10. Building on describing people:
  - a. Introducing adjectives which describe people, e.g. “He is strong.”, “She is nice”.
11. Building on counting items
  - a. question “How many things ? (are there)”
  - b. answer “There are # items .”

As with the level one curriculum there is an open month for review or other lesson focuses which the teacher feels necessary to learn.

### Level 3

For students with 2 or more years experience learning the FUEL system  
or junior high/ older students

With two years of English study under the FUEL system the student should be able to communicate simple thoughts relating to the learned subjects. Teachers will find that the constant exposure to and gradual progression of the target language over the two year period will have embedded itself into the student memory thus insuring the student

does not forget the basic sentence patterns as well as a variety of useful vocabulary. It is often difficult, though, for teachers to decide on what to teach next as simple phrase and sentence learning give way to more spontaneous or natural language learning. Ideally, this level is best suited for upper elementary school aged students; however, it may be a good idea for the teacher to review the first two levels a little while longer before proceeding to level 3. For young children it may be impossible to go on to this level. Although the title of this section mentions Jr. High and high school students, teachers may also want to introduce the overall concepts of the first two years to new students before introducing this level.

The third level of the FUEL system is a continuation of the first two years. In this level students learn to give more opinionated or factual answers without using yes or no. By this time students will have had exposure to question words such as “what”, “when” and “who”, but this will have been at a very basic level. At the third level students learn to be creative and experiments with question patterns and answers. Ultimately, the goal of level three is for the students to be able to recognize when English is being spoken and to answer more quickly. Furthermore, the students should try to start thinking in English rather than translating back and forth or taking a elongated amount of time to formulate and produce language.

1. Giving a self introduction stating:

- a. name- “My name is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- b. last name- “My last name is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- c. age- “I am # years old.”
- d. place where you live- “I live in \_\_\_\_\_.”
- e. address- “My address is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- f. telephone number- “My telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- g. birthday- “My birthday is \_\_\_\_\_.”
- h. school- “I go to \_\_\_\_\_(school).”

Other self-intro add-ons

- i. hobbies or interests- “My hobby is \_\_\_\_\_ or I am interested in\_\_\_\_\_.”
- j. Likes- “I like a and b.”
- k. Dislikes- “I don’t like x or y.”
- l. anything the teacher finds valid for self-intro<sup>6</sup>.

2. Introducing a friend or relative

- a. “This is my \_\_\_\_\_.”
- b. “He/ she is my \_\_\_\_\_.”

3. Telling about things you have and describing them simply.

- a. Introducing the object- “This is my\_\_\_\_\_.”, “I have a\_\_\_\_\_.”
- b. Describing the object with simple adjectives- “It’s big, old, green, etc.”

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<sup>6</sup> for a complete explanation of self introduction exercises please refer to *Personal Profile Building Exercises* article in the July, 2008 issue of the Internet TESL Journal, [www.iteslj.org](http://www.iteslj.org)

- c. Telling it's history or how the student got it- "It was a present from my\_\_\_\_.", "I got it at, in, etc."
- 4. Telling about your family members.
  - a. introducing the family member- "this is my mother, father, etc."
  - b. give their statistics- age, job, birthday, hobby, etc.
  - c. describe their likes and dislikes
- 5. Talking about your interests or hobbies
- 6. Telling about things you want
  - a. describing specifics about the item you want to have
  - b. talking about why you want it
- 7. Talking about things you have
  - a. describe the item with adjectives
  - b. tell pertinent information about it, e.g. when you received or bought it, what it means to you. Note- Jr. High school students may have difficulties at first. Teacher may need to provide templates or examples
- 8. Giving more detailed positions
  - a. use of prepositions that give more detail, e.g. on the top of, near the ...
  - b. use more detailed directions, e.g. block counting, on the next street over, near the....
- 9. Basic verb usage concepts introduced.
  - c. basic verbs with pronouns, e.g. " I eat \_\_\_\_\_" or "He goes to \_\_\_\_\_".
  - d. Making suggestions with "Let's"

### Vocabulary building categories

Vocabulary building is one of the central focal points of the FUEL system. The more words the student knows the more language they can produce. The following list separates commonly taught vocabulary into type specific categories. FUEL lesson suggestions are listed after some of the vocabulary categories. The best method for word study is through flash card use. Flash cards can be bought at any education store or from online education material dealers. Teachers may want to create their own flash cards. Exercises with vocabulary should include pronunciation drills as most learners will have difficulties pronouncing certain letter sounds or phonetic combinations such “th”, “v” and “ing”.

Fruit- *apple, orange, banana, grape, lemon, lime, pineapple, peach, melon, watermelon, mango, blueberry, strawberry, cherry, litchi, raspberry, blackberry, gooseberry, mango, papaya, guava, pear, apple pear, etc.*

**(communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting)**

Vegetables- *lettuce, cabbage, red cabbage, spinach, pepper, corn, potato, tomato, squash, pumpkin, radish, carrot, ginger, garlic, green onion, leek, onion, beet, turnip, parsnip, celery, Chinese cabbage, bok choy, mushrooms, eggplant, yam, sweet potato, bamboo shoot, peas, green beans, etc.*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting )**

Animals- jungle- *hippopotamus, elephant, zebra, giraffe, tiger, lion, rhinoceros, chimpanzee, gorilla, monkey, leopard, cheetah*

reptiles- *lizard, crocodile, alligators, turtle, tortoise, snake*

farm- *cow, horse, chicken, pig, chicks, sheep, goat, rabbit*

forest- *raccoon, bear, squirrel, wolf, coyote, deer, elk, moose, beaver, boar, fox*

pets- *dog, cat, hamster, gerbil*

birds- *owl, parrot, crow, eagle, swallow, pigeon, hawk, falcon, ostrich, emu, seagull, pelican, swan, duck, goose*

myth- *dragon, kirin, unicorn*

water life- *octopus, shark, whale, sawfish, swordfish, catfish, bass, trout, squid, starfish, jellyfish, crab, lobster, shrimp, otter, seal, sea lion, orca, porpoise, dolphin, manatee, walrus*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting )**

Occupations- *doctor, lawyer, dress maker, dentist, teacher, professor, librarian, fire fighter, police officer, shoe maker, toy maker, chef, cook, bus driver, taxi driver, pilot, computer programmer, nurse, soldier, athlete, mechanic, farmer, painter, artist, builder*

**(FUEL communication themes: describing people)**

Places in a city- *shopping mall, movie theater, restaurant, book store, bakery, post office, police station, fire station, office building, city hall, museum, bus station, train station, airport, convenience store, park*

**(FUEL communication themes: positions, where is)**

Colors- *red, blue, yellow, green, orange, purple, black, white, pink, light blue, light green, violet, gray, brown*

**(FUEL communication themes: what)**

Food- *hamburger, French fries, hot dog, pizza, spaghetti, pasta, noodles, Chinese food, bread, rice, cereal, eggs, beef, fried chicken, pork, steak, ham, salad, sandwich, fish, seafood, omelet, pancakes, bacon, vegetable soup, chicken soup, tomato soup, stew, curry*

**(FUEL communication themes: want, have, like)**

Drinks- *water, milk, apple juice, orange juice, grape juice, pineapple juice, lemonade, tea, coffee, green tea, jasmine tea, herb tea, tomato juice, vegetable juice, carrot juice, cola, soda, beer, wine.*

**(FUEL communication themes: want, have, like)**

Sweets- *chocolate, lollipop, candy bar, gum, ice cream, popsicle, cake, snow cone, sundae, pie, candy*

**(FUEL communication themes: want, have, like, counting)**

Scary things (good for Halloween)- *ghost, witch, vampire, mummy, werewolf, Frankenstein, zombie, monster, goblin, evil tree*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/ that, like, describing things)**

Flowers and trees- *rose, daffodil, dandelion, daisy, tulip, oak tree, redwood tree, cedar tree, pine tree, palm tree*

**(FUEL communication themes: like, counting)**

Cars and vehicles- *car, truck, sports car, motorcycle, scooter, police car, fire engine, boat, sailboat, ferry, ship, cruise ship, airplane, helicopter, train, subway, tractor, semi-truck, jet ski, bicycle, unicycle, tricycle, skateboard, roller skates, ambulance, taxi, bus*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting )**

Shapes- *circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval, diamond, star, pentagon, hexagon, octagon, figure 8*

Body parts- *head, shoulder, neck, arm, elbow, wrist, hand, finger, chest, back, waist, hip, leg, thigh, knee, shin, ankle, foot, toe, eye, ear, hair, forehead, chin, cheek, nose, mouth, fingernail, toenail, skin, organs- brain, heart, lung, stomach*

Sports- *soccer, baseball, football, basketball, hockey, cross-country, track & field, tennis, golf, fencing, skiing, lacrosse, wrestling, judo, boxing, archery*

**(FUEL communication themes: like, can)**

Musical instruments- *piano, guitar, trumpet, tuba, violin, organ, drum, taiko drum, flute, keyboard, recorder, xylophone, saxophone*

**(FUEL communication themes: like, can)**

Martial arts (just a personal interest)- *Kung fu, Karate, Judo, Kendo, Kenpo, Wushu, Arnis, Silat, Tae Kwon Do, Jeet Kune Do, Savate, Boxing, Wrestling, Hapkido, Muay Thai, Kalaripayattu, Fencing, Ninjutsu, Aikido, Hung Gar, Wing Chun, Mantis Boxing, Nomad Boxing, Capoeira, Jujutsu, etc.*

**(FUEL communication themes: like, can)**

Opposite & descriptive words- *big/little, large/small, up/down, near/far, high/low, new/old, heavy/light, cheap/expensive, rich/poor, pretty/ugly, tall/short, fat/thin, light/dark, open/closed, fast/slow, hard/soft*

**(FUEL communication themes: describing things)**

House rooms-*living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, garage, bedroom, rec room, family room, study, den, sewing room, etc.*

**(FUEL communication themes: positions)**

Things one can find in a house- *bed, table, chair, sofa, couch, stove, refrigerator, oven, bathtub, sink, toilet, closet, television, computer, DVD player, stereo, clock, dishes, glasses, cups, silverware, pictures, carpet, mirror*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting )**

Things one can find at school- *pencil, paper, pen, marker, blackboard, chalk, whiteboard, desk, eraser, stapler, glue, paste, pencil sharpener, crayons*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting )**

Clothing and accessories- *shirt, pants, skirt, dress, sweatshirt, t-shirt, underwear, socks, shoes, boots, sandals, tennis shoes, coat, jacket, raincoat, vest, short sleeve shirt, shorts, long sleeve shirt, tights, nylons, hat, cap, watch, ring, necklace, bracelet, glasses, headband, bandana*

**(FUEL communication themes: this/that, like, have, want, counting )**

Nature places- *mountain, desert, jungle, forest, river, sea, ocean, lake, meadow, hill, valley*

I usually set a vocabulary theme for each month that somewhat relates to the communication theme. Vocabulary is fun and easy to teach. Students can readily review learned vocabulary through a variety of exercises and games.

## Conclusion

In short, the FUEL system is designed to train students to recognize and use basic, everyday English. Various language targets are introduced to students over the course of training along with a large amount of vocabulary. The language targets are developed upon as the student continues their English training. The course has been designed in hopes that all students who learn English by means of this system can develop a basic skill in English as well as gain confidence to speak it.

To English teachers, this system can either compliment textbook oriented classes or can be used as a blueprint for developing lessons to get the students speaking English to you and to fellow classmates. This system can also be incorporated as review for secondary students and adults who are getting back into studying English for personal or business purposes. It is possible that similar methods exist. I really don't think I have stumbled on to something miraculous, yet, if I have, I invite those reviewing this system to compare, contrast and make their additions or subtractions as they see fit.

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